

Catawba County Emergency Medical Services

Standard Operating Guidelines

Forcible Entry

On occasion we are confronted with the situation of being locked out of a house where there is a patient inside.

If you can confirm a patient is inside a locked structure and they cannot allow you access due to a condition you may force entry into the structure. You do not have to wait for law enforcement.

- There are some considerations to make in these cases:
 - Is there a life safety issue?
 - Any reasonable suspicion or confirmation that the patient is injured is an indication to force entry.
 - Types of confirmation?
 - C-MED tells you that they have talked to the patient and the patient is immobile on the floor or injured and cannot allow access.
 - If you can see a patient immobile on the floor.
- Items you should consider before forcibly entering a structure
 - Possibly have C-MED patch you and the patient together via phone. **DO NOT ALLOW THE CONNECTION TO BE DISCONNECTED UNTIL YOU ARE PHYSICALLY WITH THE PATIENT.** Remember, we do not want to lose an established line of contact with the patient.
 - If you or the dispatcher can talk to the patient, let the patient know that you are forcing entry. This is especially helpful if the patient is confused.
 - **FIRST AND FOREMOST, REMEMBER YOUR OWN SAFETY. IF YOU THINK THAT THE PATIENT IS ARMED AND IS GOING TO DEFEND THEIR PROPERTY, DO NOT FORCE ENTRY, WAIT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, CALL THE SHIFT SUPERVISOR.**
 - **DO AS LITTLE DAMAGE AS POSSIBLE (I.E., BREAKING A WINDOW VERSUS KICKING DOWN A DOOR)**
 - An incident report should be submitted anytime we force entry into a structure. Include the reason for forcing entry and a description of any damage that occurred.
- When possible, make reasonable efforts to secure the structure prior to leaving. If you are unable to secure the structure, contact the on-duty Shift Supervisor or local law enforcement for assistance.